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www.health.ri.gov

Interim Health Advisory for School Nurse Teachers

Date: August 12, 2009
To: School Nurse Teachers
From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
Re: School Nurse Teachers and H1N1 (Swine) Influenza Virus

As everyone prepares for the start of the 2009/2010 school year, the Department of Health (HEALTH) wants to remind all schools that it is likely that we will see a resurgence of influenza-like illness (ILI) and H1N1 infection in the fall and winter.

Prevention measures continue to be of the utmost importance.

- Remind students to wash their hands frequently with soap and water throughout the day. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand gels.
- Ensure that continued, adequate handwashing supplies and/or hand sanitizer are available in classrooms and in common areas (cafeterias, gymnasiums, libraries). Make sure that bathrooms are supplied with soap and paper towels.
- Children should be instructed to cough and sneeze into their elbow.
- Children with flu-like symptoms (fever with cough or fever with sore throat) should be separated and sent home from school.
- Children with flu-like symptoms must remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100°F/37.8°C) or signs of a fever. Their fevers should disappear without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- Continue to report daily school absenteeism information through normal channels. In addition, report any possible disease clusters (two or more students with the same illness in the same classroom) directly to HEALTH at 222-2577.
- Check the [HEALTH website](http://www.health.ri.gov) for new and/or updated guidance and advisories. Any guidance that is revised or updated will be date stamped for easier reference.
- For sample parent informational/educational letters, contact HEALTH's PIO at 222-3998.

Resources

- Rhode Island Department of Health H1N1 Influenza Site: <http://www.health.ri.gov/pandemicinfluenza/swineinfluenza/swineinfluenza.php>
- CDC H1N1 Influenza Site: <http://www.cdc.gov/influenza/swine>.
- WHO H1N1 Influenza Site: <http://www.who.int/en/>